



Warrior Special



2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team
25th Infantry Division

Warriors Take On The National Training Center



Q3 - 2014

Command Team’s Foreword

Warriors!

Thank you for all that you have done over the last six months. The planning and execution of a very short notice National Training Center (NTC) Decisive Action rotation has had its challenges, but you all have worked together as a team of teams, to not only overcome, but to excel in so many areas. The results of the rotation are a testament to the strength of our team. Leaders, Soldiers and Families all pulled together to make a tremendous training opportunity happen and happen to a very high standard. We did it together safely and should be very proud of our accomplishments.

As part of a larger Army in transition, our Brigade was given short notice to deploy to NTC as the Army gained funds after Sequestration late last year. The funding that became available to the Army was spent buying readiness and our rotation was part of this larger effort to keep the Army ready for our Nation's call - whenever, wherever. From official notification in late January to “boots on the ground,” it was only 88 days. Most Brigades know they are going to a place like NTC more than a year out and have a dedicated training glide path. Despite how the rotation came to be, we all participated in the largest deployment and re-deployment of personnel and equipment that the 25th Infantry Division has seen in over four years. We trained hard in the Mojave Desert during our pre-training period so we could accomplish the tasks needed to start our rotation. From individual and crew served weapons qualifications to driver's training to Stryker crew gunnery to executing Platoon live fire exercises and situational training exercises across the BCT, you gained expertise on your equipment and learned to live and fight effectively in the desert. Our pre-training was absolutely necessary to setting the conditions for a safe training rotation as we did many things we couldn't get to at home station in such a compressed timeline.

In our rotation, every Company, Troop and Battery executed multiple situational training exercises and each maneuver Company and Troop conducted combined arms live fires on world class ranges - the second time in the last two years that our team has done CALFEXs at this level. Our artillery Batteries shot countless rounds in support of every units' training throughout the rotation with accuracy, living up to their motto “On Time”. We were joined by teammates from 2-25 AVN, the 25th ASOS, 8th MP Brigade, 45th Sustainment Brigade and a host of other smaller units who helped to make up our Brigade Combat team.

During the force-on-force training, we fought three tough battles with an enemy that came to fight us. From unconventional threats to a near-peer military with capabilities like anti-armor weapons, artillery, armor and attack aviation, the opposing forces, or “OPFOR,” from the 11th ACR gave us a great fight. A fight designed to be tough, so that in the future when we may be called upon to fight a real enemy of our nation, the fight will be easier than what we faced at NTC.

Most Brigades leave the NTC having learned many lessons and having grown for the experience. In Decisive Action rotations, very few Brigades hand the OPFOR a sound defeat, but you all gave way together during our second battle to do just that - our first-ever executed BCT defense. Our Cavalry Squadron “won” the reconnaissance fight and denied the OPFOR the ability to understand the situation. Our Cavalry, in partnership with the artillery, attack aviation and Air Force assets, sought the OPFOR deep to our front and continuously attacked them in the day leading up to our defense of the Granite Mountains, so that we would face a much-depleted enemy. In our main battle area, all of the Infantry battalions sought the best ground to fight from and maintained it so when the enemy came, they came to fight on our terms. As the enemy approached, the team held the line and massed the full effects of our ability to destroy their armored formations in our engagement areas. The enemy's 11th Brigade Tactical Group had just two Tanks and three Russian BMPs left at the end of the fight. The teamwork that led to this moment is also proof that we can do anything we set our minds to accomplish.

Throughout it all, every system in this team was exercised. Communications and mission command were stretched over great distances and tough terrain. Staffs planned and worked to execute operations. We reversed a negative trend at the NTC for this type of fighting in how we took care of our simulated wounded Soldiers and greatly increased their survival rates as we cared for our own and evacuated our wounded to higher level care while we continued to fight. We also saw miracles performed as our mechanics and operators rapidly built combat power in each fight to allow us to start each battle at an 85% operational readiness rate on our equipment. The support from each unit's logisticians and from our Brigade Support Battalion enabled and sustained us successfully over 27 total days of training in the desert.

The attitude of the Warrior Brigade says it all. We were humble and willing to learn. We owned our training and we got the most out of everything this experience had to offer us. The power in our formation isn't our equipment. It's you. Soldiers are the power of our formation, and we all have a very talented group of Soldiers in the Warrior Brigade. Together, we are a force to be reckoned with and the force of choice. Be proud of all that you have accomplished and continue to build upon what you have learned.

WARRIORS!

JEFFREY D. SWEEZER
CSM, USA
Brigade Command Sergeant Major

THOMAS H. MACKEY
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding



Chaplain’s Corner



The Army life is constantly filled with times of transition. Let’s define the word first. Transition from the Greek and Latin means a time of “transit” or movement. Basically CHANGE. Change is a part of a Soldier’s and family’s life.

We just returned from an extended training exercise and time separated from family in a strange place. We had to transition into the training environment and then transition into returning to Hawaii.

Transition is ALWAYS moving forward. One can never transition back, because time moves forward. Our lives are full of change and thus adapting to the new change equals transition.

What about your life and family? Being away from your spouse, a new baby, promotion or job responsibility, PCS orders, change of command, a new car or motorcycle, new SCUBA gear (YEAH), or even time alone

with your significant other. All of these require some sort of adaptation or adjustment to something new.

For many, change does not come easy and it can create times of anxiety and challenge in a relationship. Fear of the new can cause someone from attempting something new, even if it’s a good thing.

Change, even though part of our everyday life, sometimes leave us feeling like we are unstable, chaotic, or without direction. Times like these are when you rely on what you know and is unchanging. Kind of like using a compass and finding north, or looking at the horizon if on a rocking boat. When we focus on the unchanging, it helps is to stabilize and renew a since of balance.

Jeremiah 31:3 tell us, “The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.” I like that word “EVERLASTING”. It is never changing, never ending, constant.

When I feel alone, or struggle with a transition, I’m reminded that even if I feel off balance, my God is rock solid and I can trust in HIM.

This is Chaplain (Maj.) David Schlichter, your 2nd SBCT Chaplain, reminding you that you are loved and you can’t do anything about it.

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Contents

Leaving for NTC.....4

NTC Arrival and Support.....6

Observer Controllers at NTC.....8

NTC Prep and Training.....10

Chaplain Treats Mind and Soul.....12

NTC Force-on-Force.....14

Golden Dragons Build Resiliency..16

Coming Home.....18





Leaving for NTC





NTC Arrival and Support



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U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Adam Phelps
Sgt. 1st Class Brian Clark, SIGINT platoon leader, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team work with Sgt. 1st Class Brad Oberklaus, lead SIGINT Trainer with Sidewinder Team, National Training Center, on improving their operating procedures during their rotation to the National Training Center on May 23.

Observer Controllers Ensure NTC Success

**By Sgt. 1st Class Adam Phelps & Sgt. Daniel Johnson
2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs**

Fort Irwin National Training Center, CALIF. – During a National Training Center rotation, one of the most integral parts of the exercise is the Observer Controller. Their role helps to ensure an element outside of the unit is there to give fresh eyes to the standard operating procedures utilized by the unit.

During rotation 14-07 at the Fort Irwin National Training Center, spanning from mid-May to the 30th, OCs provided the critical eye needed to make the vast improvements

expected from a rotation at the most intense and realistic training environment in the world.

“We act as a mirror for the brigade,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brad Oberklaus, lead SIGINT Trainer with Sidewinder Team, NTC. “For my job in particular, I’ll serve as a mirror for the signal intelligence platoon’s platoon leader and platoon sergeant. I give them feedback on what I’m seeing from the outside. There are a lot of times your own mechanisms you’ve put in place will work in your eyes, but from the outside you might see a couple hitches here and there.”

Being an OC has its own challenges as changing a long-standing mindset

can present its own difficulties.

“Every brigade is different, because every one I have mentored has had different levels of experience, but overall everyone has been receptive to the feedback,” said Oberklaus. “There will be resistance at first. That’s inevitable because units are set in their ways. But as they carry on throughout the rotation they start to see that doctrinally there are better ways to doing things.”

“It’s nice to have another set of eyes and for them to bring in the experience of all the rotations they have had throughout their career and to ask questions to make me think of better ways to implement SIGINT into the brigade’s fight,” said

Sgt. 1st Class Brian Clark, SIGINT platoon leader, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

“The availability that the OCs provide whenever I have a question, specifically when not coming from a strong SIGINT background, is helpful,” said 1st Lt. Christina West, SIGINT platoon leader, 2-14 Cav., 2nd SBCT. “I am able to pick their brains and understand much more of the scope of their field of specialty.”

This rotation is different from rotations that were conducted over the last decade. NTC has recently transitioned from a Counter Insurgency (COIN) training regimen to a Decisive Action (DATE) training plan.

“We recently made a change from COIN rotations to DATE rotations,” said Oberklaus. “COIN being counterinsurgency and DATE being decisive action, more force-on-

force, army versus army, rather than insurgency.”

“For a long time, we have operated in a digital fight. Now we are going back to this force-on-force DATE rotation-style fight and having that physical checklist is something we have really taken to heart to increase our readiness,” said Clark.

“What we get to do here is shift units mindset of COIN operations to DATE operations. Which is pretty important given how things are going,” said Oberklaus. “I think our job to get units to accept the DATE mindset is the most important thing.”

This type of training is instrumental in ensuring a unit is fit for combat or contingency operations around the world. It is the most intense training a unit can receive without actually deploying to a combat environment.

“It (NTC) is particularly important for us because we got to see our systems operate at 100% and we

haven’t gotten to do that back at the home station,” said West.

“It helps our teams operate individually in supporting the battalions instead of just as a platoon and company level field training exercise, and it helps us to test all of our equipment to its full capabilities,” said Clark.

“An NTC rotation is kind of like the paramount of all the training,” said Oberklaus. “We facilitate training you can’t get in garrison. We hope that units take the methods that we use here back to home station and continue putting into practice the feedback we give them.”

This rotation will continue to press the limits of the Warrior Brigade as it heads into force-on-force training over the next week. With the help of OCs, the training is sure to prove a success in preparing this unit for future contingency operations in the Pacific.



NTC Preparation and Training



Chaplain Treats Mind and Soul

**By Sgt. 1st Class Adam Phelps & Sgt. Daniel Johnson
2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs**

Fort Irwin National Training Center, CALIF. – With combat operations, tactical movements and intelligence gathering happening simultaneously, sometimes it is easy to forget the individual hardships each Soldier faces. That is where the Chaplain's role becomes instrumental.

As the Soldiers of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team continue force on force operations at the National Training Center through the end of May the stress levels

are running high and the brigade Chaplain, Maj. David R. Schlichter, provides Soldiers as a safe place to talk and vent about their hardships.

"Soldiers become so full that they needed to vent and I'm the safest person on the planet because in that environment," said Schlichter. "It's just the two of us and we're out in the shade of the water buffalo, it's a confidential environment. Everything that is said between the two of us is sealed until my death no matter what it is. So Soldiers frequently feel very refreshed. One of the things I want them to feel is loved."

"It relieves the stress that's building up inside everyone. It's a pressure

release valve almost," said Spc. Russell S. Guercio, a signal intelligence specialist with 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd SBCT. "They can kind of somewhat recharge for five minutes talking to him, getting their minds off the task at hand. It's like a refresher, a breath mint for the brain."

Sometimes overlooked as a source of mental care, the Chaplain and his unit ministry teams provide a range of services for Soldiers and brigade leadership.

Providing religious support and advising the commander are the chaplain's functions, but he does that in multiple ways, said Schlichter.

"We care for the living," said

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Adam Phelps

Chaplain (Maj.) David R. Schlichter, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team chaplain, prays with Spc. Russell S. Guercio, a signal intelligence specialist with 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd SBCT, during the force-on-force portion of the National Training Center rotation May 25.



Schlichter. "That's a real passion of mine because I love my Soldiers and whether it's combat stress, just the field environment, leadership issues or being away from home. I deal in the human factor, whatever that Soldier has or whatever they're dealing with, I'm going to meet them with strength and encouragement, and bring some wisdom and council to build them up."

"Levity," said Guercio. "He can make someone smile when they're having a bad day so bringing a somber mood to a lighter mood. Also, if someone is really down and really has problems he is someone safe to talk to."

For those who see the Chaplain first as a religious leader, with Schlichter,

that isn't necessarily the case. For him, meeting the Soldiers at a human level is the most important key.

"Regardless of your faith background I want to meet you first as a human and then I will typically ask 'what's your first name?' and in that setting with just the two of us. I will be Dave and you will be Adam and it takes that rank off and it breaks it down. I'm going to meet you as a human being."

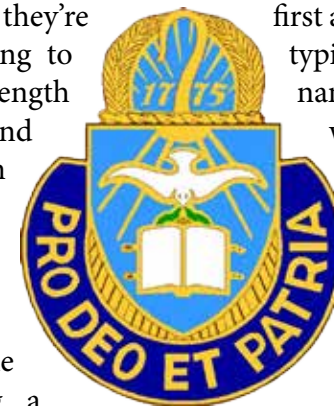
He asks people where they are from, are they married, do they have kids? Those things are irrelevant to faith. He meets people as a human first and if it goes into a faith conversation that is fine, said Schlichter.

"I think the Chaplain Corps is

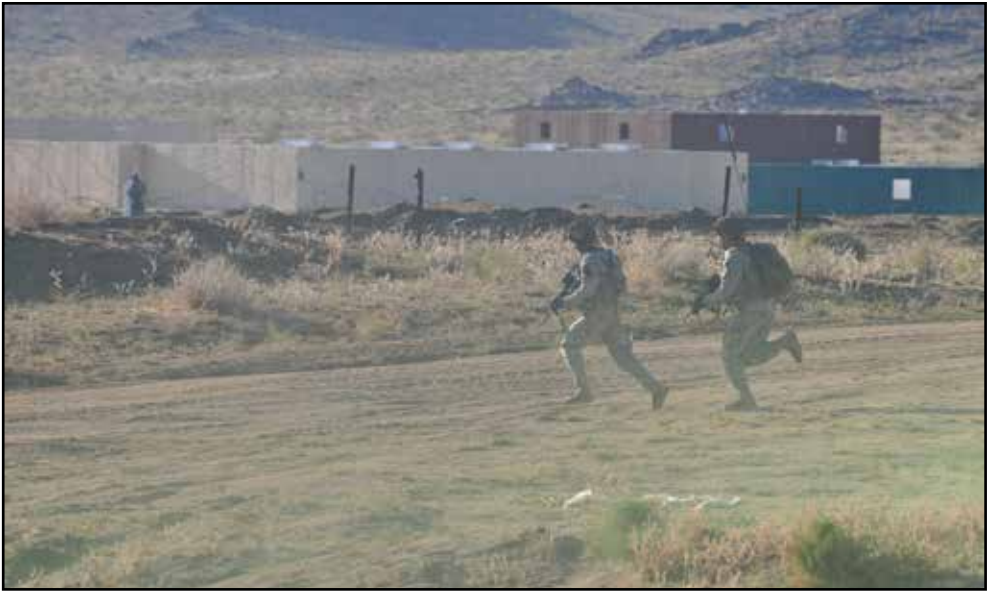
a great asset for the Army," said Guercio. "Not everyone has friends, not everyone has people to talk to or family."

The chaplain's tools are not just limited to the battlefield, or even to Soldiers. The chaplain can provide various services to couples and families as well.

"I actually have two masters degrees in counseling so those tools that I can bring to meet the Soldier where they are at, to help them with their personal issues or family issues, that's what I love to do," said Schlichter. "I love to share my tools and teach tools to that Soldier. It's going to change their life. It's going to change how they process things how they handle things, and our time together, they are now stronger and more equipped than they were before, and that's addicting because I get to impact their life."



NTC Force-on-Force





U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Ebonee Ervin
Staff Sgt. Larissa Anderson stands with her host Family during 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division's SOS Day. SOS Day is one of the many ways the Golden Dragon battalion builds resiliency in its families and takes care of its Soldiers, past and present.

Golden Dragons Build Resiliency

**By 1st Lt. Alex Wurzel and 1st Lt. Nick Shumpis
1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, Unit Public Affairs Representatives**

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Family support was fundamental to 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division's personal Soldier readiness during 2nd SBCT's deployment to the National Training Center in May and June.

1-14 Inf. Soldiers spent 48 days away from Hawaii and their families which emphasized the importance of preparing and strengthening

family networks. Within 2nd SBCT, there is a chaplain-run, commander endorsed marriage workshop, similar to Strong Bonds, called Relationship Enhancement and Sustainment Training (REST).

"Just as the strength of our unit is in the collective team, so too is the strength of our families when properly integrated within the unit," said Chaplain Darrell Burriss. "One means to do this is the Relationship Enhancement and Sustainment Training (REST) marriage workshops, which are great opportunities to connect families across the battalion and build strong family networks."

1-14 Inf. Soldiers participated in

reintegration training before leaving the NTC, and again during the 72 hours after returning home.

"For the family experiencing a long period of separation, reintegration training is important because each separation and reunion brings its own unique challenges. This training is an essential part of our preparation to return home after NTC," said Sgt. Joshua Potts, 1-14 Inf.'s chaplain's assistant.

"Family Readiness Groups are a commander's tool to communicate with families and ensure they have an understanding of what their Soldier does when he goes to work. At meetings, FRGs distribute information about upcoming

training events to allow the family to identify days the Soldiers may be away from home or working late to ensure unit readiness."

"Communication helps my family adapt and plan for training as well as prepares them to be in the right state of mind while I'm away," says Staff Sgt. Brian Guinn, the Golden Dragon's Electronic Warfare Officer.

"The battalion commander and command sergeant major town hall meetings are a great tool to get information to Soldiers and spouses. Family support smart cards would be a great tool for families to have

in order to know who to contact in any given situation," recommended Spc. Chase Dunham, a medic from HHC.

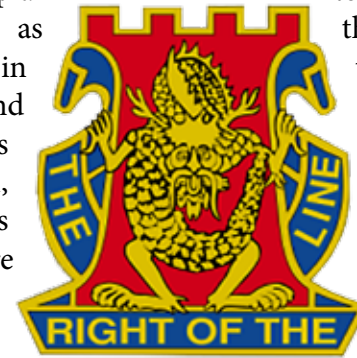
The Army offers resiliency training to prepare Soldiers and their families to confront the stressors of Army life by providing a multitude of life skills necessary to cope with and excel under adverse conditions. Army resiliency training emphasizes unity and support for one another above the individual and self-reliance.

"Resiliency training allows Soldiers to cope with stress and focus on the mission, as well as teach vital

life skills that strengthen mental toughness," said Staff Sgt. Dustin McMillan, the Golden Dragon's master resiliency trainer.

Soldiers rely on their families for the support they need to complete their mission. Mission success demands that units keep open lines of communication to Soldiers and families to sustain their continuing support. This support helps Soldiers concentrate on mission success instead of worrying about unprepared families.

"I fully support the training my husband's unit requires of him," said Robin Shumpis, "The better prepared he and his Soldiers are, the safer I will feel when he leaves on a combat mission."





Coming Home



